

# The Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP™):

*Service Score Results:* Baseline

SPEP™ ID and Time: 274-T01

Agency Name: Abraxas  
Program Name: Workbridge  
Service Name: Employment Initiative  
Cohort Total: 38  
Timeframe of Selected Cohort: All delinquent youth who began this service on/after January 1, 2019 and ended this service on/before December 31, 2019  
Referral County(s): Allegheny  
Date(s) of Interview(s): December 12, 2019 and January 31, 2019  
Lead County: Allegheny  
Probation Representative(s): Ken Chiaverini and Bill Shultz  
EPIS Representative: Christa Park and Dawn Hooton

## Description of Service:

Abraxas began in Marienville, Pennsylvania in 1973 with only one site and only 30 clients. Now, over 45 years later, Abraxas Youth & Family Services (AYFS) operates community-based and residential programming for at-risk youth, adults and families. Delivering innovative, personalized and collaborative services, AYFS offers treatment, behavioral health services, educational & vocational support, life skills, family counseling, recreation and community engagement. Treatment services are strength-based, client-centered, family-oriented and trauma-focused. AYFS has established a diversified continuum of care to include alternative education, in-home services, outpatient clinics, group counseling, aftercare services, detention and shelter care and a variety of out-of-home services from transitional living to secure treatment. WorkBridge is a community-based program for male & female youth between the ages of 10-21 involved with the Allegheny County Juvenile Court. WorkBridge provides referred youth the opportunity to obtain meaningful employment, complete court-ordered community service, and/or pay court-ordered restitution. Youth are also able to develop competencies in accordance with the principles of Balanced & Restorative Justice. There are three components to the WorkBridge program: Stipend Program, Community Service Program, and Employment Initiative. Youth may be referred for multiple components but will only participate in them one at a time. For example, Probation may refer a youth to both the Community Service and Employment Initiative. WorkBridge will collaborate with Probation to identify priority need (e.g., Community Service). WorkBridge will open a case for the youth in that component only. Once the youth completes the requirements for that component (e.g., completes all owed community service hours), WorkBridge closes the case and opens a new case in the other component (e.g., Employment Initiative). Employment Initiative is a service that offers workshops and assists youth with finding meaningful, paid employment opportunities. It is particularly relevant for youth owing financial obligations to the Court, as the program is designed to assist the youth in finding ways to earn money which can be applied to restitution balances. WorkBridge is an affiliate of the Pennsylvania Academic and Career/Technical Training Alliance (PACTT). WorkBridge uses resources from PACTT, such as the Employability & Soft Skills Manual, as the basis for its soft skills workshop. The soft skills workshops provide youth information on skills associated with career awareness & exploration, job search & retention, career advancement, and life skills/personal/social development; the soft skills workshops are intended for youth with little to no formal work experience. WorkBridge has the ability for “mobile soft skills workshops” and can travel directly to the youth. Other available workshops enable youth to earn industry-standard certifications in areas such as ServSafe®, Flagger, and OSHA-10. Referrals from Juvenile Probation are processed within a day, and cases are assigned an Employment Counselor. Employment Counselors are responsible for contacting the youth/family to complete an initial intake assessment. Employment Counselors are also responsible for assisting the youth in finding appropriate sites for the youth to pursue employment. Youth work with their Employment Counselor to develop resumes & reference lists as well as complete/submit job applications. Employment Counselors maintain weekly contact with the youth to establish if employment has been found. Once the youth is hired and completed any orientation, the Employment Counselor will design a “Restitution Contract”. The Restitution Contract outlines the amount & frequency of payments from the youth’s paycheck that will be used for restitution. The amount & frequency of payments is made in collaboration with the juvenile probation officer. The Employment Counselor maintains weekly contact with the youth, probation officer, and/or work supervisor to monitor the youth’s progress.

## The four characteristics of a service found to be the most strongly related to reducing recidivism:

### 1. SPEP™ Service Type: Restitution/Community Service

Based on the meta-analysis, is there a qualifying supplemental service? No

If so, what is the Service Type? There is no qualifying supplemental service

Was the supplemental service provided? N/A      Total Points Possible for this Service Type: 15

Total Points Received: 15      Total Points Possible: 35

2. Quality of Service: Research has shown that programs that deliver service with high quality are more likely to have a positive impact on recidivism reduction. Monitoring of quality is defined by existence of written protocol, staff training, staff supervision, and how drift from service delivery is addressed.

Total Points Received: 20      Total Points Possible: 20

**3. Amount of Service:** Score was derived by calculating the total number of weeks and hours received by each youth in the service. The amount of service is measured by the target amounts of service for the SPEP™ service categorization. Each SPEP™ service type has varying amounts of duration and contact hours. Youth should receive the targeted amounts to have the greatest impact on recidivism reduction.

**Points received for Duration or Number of Weeks:** 4

**Points received for Contact Hours or Number of Hours:** 0

**Total Points Received:** 4 **Total Points Possible:** 20

**4. Youth Risk Level:** The risk level score is compiled by calculating the total % of youth that score above low risk, and the total % of youth who score above moderate risk to reoffend based on the results of the YLS.

33 youth in the cohort are Moderate, High, Very High YLS Risk Level for a total of 10 points

7 youth in the cohort are High or Very High YLS Risk Level for a total of 3 points

**Total Points Received:** 13 **Total Points Possible:** 25

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**Basic SPEP™ Score:** 52 total points received out of 100 points. Compares service to any other type of SPEP™ therapeutic service. (e.g. individual counseling compared to cognitive behavioral therapy, social skills training, mentoring, etc.)

*Note: Services with scores greater than or equal to 50 show the service is having a positive impact on recidivism reduction.*

**Program Optimization Percentage:** 64% This percentage compares the service to the same service types found in the research. (e.g. individual counseling compared to all other individual counseling services included in the research.)

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### **The SPEP™ and Performance Improvement**

The intended use of the SPEP™ is to optimize the effectiveness of reducing recidivism among juvenile offenders. Recommendations for performance improvement are included in the service Feedback Report, and these recommendations are the focus of the Performance Improvement Plan, a shared responsibility of the service provider and the juvenile probation department.

#### 1. Regarding Quality of Service Delivery:

##### a. Written Protocol:

- i. Document the process that is utilized in matching the YLS criminogenic needs of the youth to the service.
- ii. Develop a table of contents for the manual that defines the service and ties in relevant documents.

##### b. Staff Supervision:

- i. Develop a summary to be added to the manual of the trainings required to be an Employment Counselor.

##### c. Organizational Response to Drift:

- i. Develop an overarching policy and procedure that describes how drift from the fidelity and quality of service delivery will be identified.
- ii. Within the policy and procedure, include an “if-then” approach for corrective action steps to be taken if service delivery departs from what is intended (e.g., drifts from the fidelity and quality of service delivery).
- iii. Ensure documentation is developed and utilized to verify implementation of the drift policy and procedure.

#### 2. Regarding Amount of Service:

- a. Communicate with Juvenile Court regarding research recommendations for the target amount of service.

#### 3. Regarding Risk Level of Youth Served:

- a. Collaborate with the referring probation officer to consider each youth’s responsivity factors (which are a portion of the YLS) during service delivery.